

Harassment in Science Act, which I am pleased to cosponsor.

In 2017, the Me Too movement sparked a national reckoning with the pervasiveness of sexual harassment. The academic workplace has not been spared. One study found that 58 percent of faculty and staff at universities have experienced sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is detrimental to individuals, often impeding career advancement and leading some to leave academia entirely. Sexual harassment also has significant consequences on the entire scientific enterprise, depriving our most critical STEM fields of skilled researchers, particularly from groups already underrepresented in STEM.

In 2018, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a report examining the contributing factors to sexual harassment in academia and the effects on women in science, technology, and medicine. The Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act includes key recommendations from the Academies' report and takes further steps to combat sexual harassment in STEM.

The National Science Foundation and other agencies have already taken significant steps to address the scourge of sexual harassment in STEM. Unfortunately, not all agencies have taken this issue as seriously, and the patchwork of policies and approaches causes confusion and increases administrative burden on grantees. This legislation helps make sure that we have consistent, governmentwide policies.

H.R. 2695 requires a coordinated approach to address sexual harassment at grant-receiving institutions and across our Federal agencies, including by requiring OSTP to issue uniform policy guidance for sexual harassment reporting at Federal science agencies.

The bill also authorizes NSF research on the contributing factors to STEM workplace harassment.

Finally, the bill would require an important follow-up study by the National Academies.

The Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act was developed following extensive consultation with experts on sexual harassment and key stakeholders, including universities. At present, 24 organizations have endorsed this bill, representing a wide spectrum of scientific disciplines, student groups, and professions.

I want to thank Chairwoman JOHNSON and Ranking Member LUCAS for introducing this important bill. I also want to thank all of the cosponsors of this bipartisan effort. I urge everyone here to help us take action toward eliminating sexual harassment in the sciences.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2695, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2695, the Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act.

I am proud to say that this bill has a foundation of years of investigation, analysis, and recommendations to the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. Curbing sexual misconduct in science is a priority that Chairwoman JOHNSON and I share.

Engaging more women in STEM studies and careers is essential to American competitiveness. Women make up over half the workforce, but account for less than 25 percent of America's STEM workforce. Unfortunately, too many women have been driven out of STEM careers due to a culture of harassment and abuse.

H.R. 2695 takes the first steps to address this problem. The bill directs NSF to expand research efforts to better understand the causes and consequences of sexual harassment affecting individuals in the scientific, technical, engineering, and mathematical workforces.

Additionally, it directs NSF to examine policies to reduce the prevalence and negative impact of such harassment.

The bill also supports the adoption of uniform guidance across the Federal science agencies to combat sexual harassment involving grant personnel.

There is an established legal process in place within higher education and in the workforce for handling claims of sexual harassment. I cannot stress this enough: this bill does not alter that process.

What this bill does do is create a uniform policy requiring universities and research institutions to report to Federal science agencies when an administrative action is taken that impacts the ability of a researcher to carry out a grant.

Pervasive sexual harassment in the scientific community discourages women from critical work and good-paying jobs and hurts American competitiveness. It is unacceptable for taxpayer dollars to fund researchers who are guilty of harassing students or colleagues.

I want to thank the stakeholders, especially the university community, for working with committee staff to improve this legislation. I believe the revised bill strikes the right balance between protecting due process and privacy, while also making sure that Federal science agencies can act if a Federal science agency grant or the personnel supporting that grant is impacted.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 2695 takes the first steps towards addressing sexual harassment in STEM fields, which is driving women out of STEM careers and damaging U.S. competitiveness.

While some progress has been made since the Science, Space, and Technology Committee first started investigating the issue almost 4 years ago, there is still much more work to be done. This legislation sends a strong message to the scientific community that misconduct will not be tolerated, and it sends a message to women who

are in STEM studies and careers that we support them.

This bill passed the House last Congress, and I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate and stakeholders to advance this legislation into law this year.

I again want to thank Chairwoman JOHNSON and her staff for working in a bipartisan and collaborative way on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I, once again, urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important and bipartisan legislation, the Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2695.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MALINOWSKI) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

VA TRANSPARENCY & TRUST ACT OF 2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2911) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan for obligating and expending Coronavirus pandemic funding made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.